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WAR PAPERS.

78

Echoes and Incidents from a Gunboat Flotilla.

PREPARED BY COMPANION

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AND

READ AT THE STATED MEETING OF DECEMBER 1, 1909.

Echoes and Incidents from a Gunboat Flotilla.

Soon after the secession movement had taken actual shape in 1861, by the formation of armies in the South and the erection of batteries along the Virginia shores of the Potomac, notably at Aquia Creek, Cockpit Point and for a distance of ten or fifteen miles below, including the neighborhood of Evansport, which covered the most intricate and difficult part of navigation; with the State of Maryland, at that time an unknown quantity bordering on the other side of the river, it became evident to the most casual observer that something must be done, and quickly, to prevent the control of the river from falling into the hands of the Confederates.

The Government, realizing this fact, promptly proceeded to organize a suitable force for that purpose.

The ships of the regular Navy were not well adapted to the work, because of their size and heavy draft, and besides, they were needed for service on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts for blockading and other duties.

It, therefore, became necessary to look elsewhere for suitable material, in the form of handy, light draft steamers, to patrol the river and its numerous inlets, bays and creeks.

As early as May 12, 1861, we find Commander J. H. Ward, U. S. Navy, under orders from the Navy Department, in consultation with Capt. S. L. Breese, Commandant of the Navy Yard, New York, the result of which was the purchase of four small steamers, the *Thomas Freckborn*, *Jacob Bell*, *Resolute*, and *Reliance*. These vessels were quickly converted into gunboats by the installation of batteries and other necessary equipments and fittings and forthwith launched into active service.

The Philadelphia ice-boat (otherwise known as the *Relief*),

loaned to the Government by the municipality of the Quaker City, with the above named vessels constituted the nucleus of the Potomac flotilla, around which was built up, as rapidly as appropriations and other conditions permitted, a force which in 1864 numbered thirty-one vessels, ranging in size from 50 tons to 650 tons and mounting in aggregate 103 guns, in main batteries, including all calibers and weights, from a 12-pounder howitzer to a 9-inch gun in smooth-bore, and from a 3-inch to a 6.4-inch (100-pounder Parrott) in rifled ordnance.

Only a few of the vessels, however, carried the larger guns. Among these were the *Com'ore Read* and the *Com'ore Morris*, both formerly New York ferry-boats, converted into gunboats, for river service, and armed with four 9-inch Dahlgreens in broadside, and one 100-pounder Parrott rifle in pivot on each end.

One vessel (the *Currituck*) had a battery of four 32-pounders of 57 cwt., in broadside, and a 30-pounder Parrott rifle in pivot, forward.

Other vessels mounted a couple of 32-pounders of the lighter weights, in broadside, and, generally, a small rifle in pivot forward (20-pounder Dahlgreen or Parrott), a few carried the 50-pounder Dahlgreen rifle, and one or two had 8-inch shell-guns.

Vessels too small to accommodate these batteries were armed with one or two howitzers (a 20-pounder rifle forward and a 24-pounder smooth-bore aft); and if only one gun was carried the after one was dispensed with.

In addition to the main battery, several of the larger boats were supplied, each, with a light 12 pounder howitzer on field-carriage, or a gatling gun, as secondary battery and for landing purposes.

All the vessels were equipped with small arms, including rifles, pistols, cutlasses and pikes, in accordance with the ordnance regulations of the time.

The Commanders-in-Chief of the flotilla, regularly ordered as such, were, in the order of dates of assignment, as follows:

1. Commander J. H. Ward, who was killed while in the act of sighting a 32 pounder on board the *Thomas Fieeborn* at Mathias Point on June 27, 1861.

2. Commander Thos. T. Craven, June 29 to November 9, 1861.

3. Lieut. Commanding R. H. Wyman, December 5, 1861, to June 30, 1862.

4. Commodore A. A. Harwood, July 1 to September 2, 1862.

5. Commodore Charles Wilkes, September 2 to September 9, 1862.

6. Commodore A. A. Harwood, September 9, 1862, to December 31, 1863.

7. Commander F. A. Parker, December 31, 1863, to July 31, 1865. The date of the disbandment of the flotilla.

Officers temporarily filling the place of Commander-in-Chief, during intervals between dates above stated, were: Commanders S. C. Rowan and John P. Gillis and Lieut. Commanding A. D. Harrell.

The commissioned personnel of the flotilla, with exception of the Commander-in-Chief and one or two aids; and under the administration of Commodore Harwood, two division commanders, was composed of volunteer officers, whose disposition as regards duty was entirely in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, who was also apparently the sole judge of the fitness of an officer for command or other responsible place on board a vessel, and who could use discretion in the selection of men to fill these places.

Whatever may be said of such a system applied to the regular organization, in the flotilla it worked very well.

Considering the fact that many of the officers were transferred from civil life, with little or no military training, and suddenly appointed to responsible positions in a new profession, it requires no lengthy argument to prove that careful selection of men for the most important duties became a grave necessity

and that the responsible officer, on the spot, should be accorded the right to select.

Under this system, if a commanding officer failed to make good he was promptly replaced by another and relegated to subordinate duty on board some other vessel, under an officer senior in rank to himself.

The exercise of this duty on the part of the Commander-in-Chief, was probably not a pleasant one, but the heart-burns and humiliation of the person affected could not be considered when compared with the interests and exigencies of the service; and the ultimate effect was to raise the tone and standard of the officers generally, to inculcate habits of study, industry and emulation, which finally resulted in a state of discipline and efficiency not excelled by any other organization afloat. It should be stated here that, prior to the fall of Alexandria and the fortifications on the Virginia shore, there were quite a number of regular officers, in addition to those previously mentioned, who participated in the engagements with the batteries at Aquia Creek and elsewhere, while on duty with the ships employed in the reduction of the Confederate works. But after the evacuation by the enemy of the river-shores, and when the daily papers began to report: "All quiet on the Potomac," these officers, impelled by a loyal ambition to serve their country more effectively, sought assignment to duty in fields of wider renown and greater glory and soon bade farewell to the "quiet" Potomac and its baby flotilla.

It is not my purpose to swell the pages of this paper by inserting a muster roll of officers of the flotilla, nor to introduce a complete list of the vessels thereof, as these are matters of record and can be obtained by referring to the Navy Registers of '62, '63, '64 and '65 and by consulting "The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion" (Series I, Vols. 4 and 5). But it may be proper to mention, here, that Commander John A. Dahlgreen, who was

Commandant of the Washington Navy Yard during the period covering the aforesaid incidents, seems to have acted as a sort of Intermediary between the Secretary of the Navy and the Commander of the flotilla, and in that capacity appears to have exercised a mild form of supervision over the movements of the vessels in cases of exigency that called for prompt decision; and, to that extent, Commander Dahlgreen may be regarded as having been connected with the flotilla.

With the detachment of the officers, and departure of the ships of the regular establishment, among which were the *Pawnee*, *Pocahontas* and others; the Potomac flotilla may be said to have taken its first stand as a separate and distinct unit of the naval forces operating to suppress the rebellion.

Whether or not all of the officers who severed their connection with the flotilla, after the heavy fighting was supposed to have been concluded, covered themselves with glory (some of them did) I am unable to say, but I do assert that they missed a grand opportunity for participating in the meanest, most contemptible and wretched kind of fighting ever recorded anywhere in civilized warfare.

After the withdrawal of the regular Confederate forces, and the departure of every man of character and principle who had cast his lot with the southern cause, for the front, to take up arms in defense of what he believed to be right and just, there were supposed to be left only the women, the children and the old men. The negroes, of course, were left to do the work. But not so—there was another class of individuals, spiritless and degenerate, who were in hiding when the men went to the front and came out only after the coast was clear to engage in the lucrative business of smuggling; and incidentally, where opportunity came, to indulge in vandalism, piracy and murder, all in the name of the Confederacy under pretense of the exercise of belligerent rights.

That the Confederacy would have hanged these villains, if

their identity had been known to the proper authorities, I have no doubt; but they were not taking any chances of being exposed or captured, as whenever a regular military force appeared these wretches took to the woods and remained in concealment until all danger of being caught had passed.

Glancing briefly at the operations of these vandals we find them engaged, first, in wanton destruction of property owned by a few citizens who declined to identify themselves with the secession movement and failed to join the southern army; and, further, in active and continuous persecution of these people, until they were either killed, driven to madness or compelled to leave the country.

Next we hear of them having boarded, looted and destroyed or carried off some defenseless vessel, becalmed, aground or otherwise unable to move, in the Chesapeake Bay or on some river in Virginia. Hence the name "Chesapeake Bay Pirate" whose catalogue of crimes includes both arson and murder.

By way of illustration of the depravity of these rascals, and as an example of what actually occurred on more than one occasion, let us suppose a man dressed after the fashion of a farm-hand, peacefully trudging behind a plow or lolling lazily on the driver's seat of a country cart; who by accident or design, as the case may be, is brought face to face with a landing party from a gunboat, and when questioned by the office-in-charge, professes the most ardent affection for the Union cause, and proceeds to tell a pathetic story of hardship and persecution that he has to endure on account of his political opinions.

Then by way of proving his loyalty, and as if suddenly seized by a patriotic impulse to injure the Confederate cause to the full extent of his opportunity, he takes a careful look around, and, in a whisper, informs the officer that at a house about two miles distant, in a direction which he indicates, is located a cargo of contraband goods landed from a schooner

two days before; that there is not an enemy in sight within twenty miles of the place and that the owner is a wealthy farmer with lots of horses, oxen and carts that can be used for transporting the goods to the river. Finally, in a crowning effort to convince the officer that he is a good Union man he states that he lives in constant dread of being impressed for military service, and that whenever regular soldiers appear in the vicinity, he has to run away and hide in the woods.

When I tell you that the landing of small parties, such as a cutter's crew, for the recovery of contraband goods known to have been smuggled into the country, was a matter of frequent occurrence, you may better comprehend the object of the farm hand in giving the information; as if, thereby, he could delay the return of the party a couple of hours or less, he would have time to assemble his vile companions on some point down the creek, where under perfect cover they would be absolutely safe from harm while murdering the crew of a boat exposed in the open.

These contemptible specimens of creation never sought a contest with an armed force, however small, in the open; always firing from cover or in ambush, with a view solely to substantial compensation in the form of plunder.

I would not be understood to say that these vampires or their methods were recognized or sanctioned by the several groups of elderly men and grown boys left with their families and organized into semi-military bodies commonly known as Home Guards, for the protection of their homes and firesides; nor should their actions be confounded with those of the regularly commissioned or appointed agents of the Confederacy, such, for example, as John Taylor Wood, an ex-lieutenant of the U. S. Navy, who resigned and took up arms for the Confederacy, and who surprised, boarded and captured two of our gunboats in the mouth of the Rappahannock River. He failed in several other attempts to capture gunboats, but succeeded

at various times in seizing vessels laden with government stores, and destroying lights, buoys and other navigation marks, all this, however, in the recognized line of warfare with a view only to injure the enemy.

But to return to the main subject, the flotilla proper. Its work extended from Alexandria to York River, including the Potomac, Wycomico, Rappahannock and Piankatank rivers, with all the intervening creeks, inlets and bays; all of which offered great facilities for contraband trade, and had to be watched incessantly to prevent it.

Owing to the small number of vessels available in the early days of the flotilla and the scarcity of officers and men to man them, this became a ponderous task, difficult of execution; as with all the activity and vigilance possible within extreme human physical limits, a flourishing illicit trade was maintained between the states of Maryland and Virginia, and perhaps between Virginia and other states, by the use of larger vessels capable of navigating the ocean with safety; but the exceptions, if any, were rare as only small, fast vessels were properly adapted to the business.

The kind of vessels employed in these enterprises was, to a limited extent, fast schooners or pungies with a carrying capacity of from fifteen to thirty tons; but the more popular and much better adapted craft was the eastern-shore three-masted canoe, which, with a good breeze, could outsail anything afloat, and being long and low in the water, with leg-of-mutton sails, was not easily detected on a dark night. These qualities, considered in connection with her handiness and light draft, made her an ideal blockade runner.

These canoes would carry from one to three tons in weight, exclusive of crew, and be safe in the the strongest breezes that blow in the bay; barring, of course, a heavy storm into which no vessel would venture if she could avoid it.

The above remarks apply especially to vessels having to cross

Chesapeake Bay; on the rivers almost any kind of boat would answer.

With the lapse of time and increase of the flotilla, this trade was reduced to a minimum and finally, when the flotilla was fully equipped, became dangerous and unprofitable and was practically abandoned.

As regards the number and location of trading stations on the Potomac I shall not attempt an account; but in a general way would say that every town, village, hamlet and barn, situated on or near the bank of a river, creek, inlet or stream, that afforded proper shelter and cover from observation, with a depth of water equal to a foot or more at low tide on the Maryland shore, became a place of export, and every similar spot on the Virginia side was made a port of entry.

Between these places, on opposite shores, where the width of the river made it practicable, was established a system of signals that enabled the parties concerned to maintain regular communication, and thereby to reduce to a minimum the chances of being caught.

Notwithstanding these precautions a good many captures were made and the goods confiscated; but the profits of the business were such that an investor could easily afford to lose one-half of his venture and still have a large balance on the credit side of his ledger, with which to continue his hazardous undertakings. As a matter of fact, one of these smugglers, after being captured, coolly informed me that if he could save one cargo in ten he would lose nothing.

It appears that no penalty other than confiscation of vessel and goods was enforced in such cases, and that, unless incriminating documents or other evidence of active participation in the war were discovered, the culprits were set at liberty.

Because of the great number of smuggling stations on the Potomac, the major portion of the force had to be employed there, leaving only a few vessels to attend to the business on the bay.

The eastern shore of Maryland offered abundant opportunity for the transmission of contraband goods by crossing Chesapeake Bay; and out of the sounds and inlets in that region came pouring a multitude of small craft, deeply laden with merchandise of all descriptions needed by the residents of the country and the army in the field in Virginia. To prevent or to check this trade became the duty of the few gunboats of the lower division, stationed in the bay to patrol the coast and rivers, between Point Lookout and York River.

A circumstance greatly favoring the execution of this task was the fact that, while the issuing stations on the eastern shore of Maryland were numerous, the receiving depots in Virginia were comparatively few, being practically limited to the main rivers, Wycomico, Rappahannock and Piankatank, and a small number of intervening creeks.

Prominent among the latter were Dividing and Mill creeks between Wycomico and Rappahannock, and Jackson's Creek, near the mouth of the Piankatank.

The scarcity in number, however, was more than compensated for by their capacity to accommodate and shelter all that could escape capture.

The natural protection afforded Dividing and Mill creeks by shoal water, tortuous channels and narrow entrance, thickly studded with small trees and foliage, sufficient to screen from observation any craft once inside and at the same time to furnish excellent cover for sharpshooters to operate on any undesirable party attempting to enter there, made these creeks the most popular resorts of the traders.

Jackson's Creek, with its deep water, perfect protection and places of concealment, supplied the needs of the larger kind of vessels employed and became a rendezvous for that class.

The main rivers were often attempted but rarely with success, the exceptions being when, from any cause, the blockading vessel happened to be temporarily absent from her station.

A couple of hours, with a good breeze and fair wind, were all sufficient for a fast sailing schooner to get under cover at some landing up the river; and as the value of the vessel was but a trifle compared with the profits, on delivery of the cargo, there was never any hesitation about entering when an opportunity presented itself.

The trade on Dividing Creek, however, had become a nauseating fact, and notwithstanding many captures appeared to grow and prosper.

Several boat expeditions, sent up the creek, had resulted in finding a vacant beach, or, at best, a few empty canoes, the killing and wounding from ambush of several men, and no material gain in other respects.

It became evident that something else must be done to get results, and it was decided that a canoe known to be in the business should be employed to carry up the creek a number of men sufficient to cope with any force likely to be found there.

Accordingly, the next large canoe captured was unloaded, the men on board of her confined, their outside clothing appropriated and other garments given them to wear.

The following morning, at daybreak, that same canoe entered the creek with an officer, dressed as an eastern-shore man, at the helm, and two of the sailors, similarly attired, one at each mast forward; while twenty-two men lay concealed on the floor of the craft, with some empty boxes and bales, exposed above, to make her appear like the *real thing*.

In this way she sailed, unmolested and apparently unsuspected, up the creek to the head of the line of canoes beached, bow on, along the shore, and there landed.

To display the United States flag, disembark and deploy along the beach, abreast the canoes, was but the work of a moment; and the astonished boatmen, before they had time to recover from the shock, readily obeyed the order to shove off and report on board the gunboat outside.

After carefully scouring the woods and firing a few volleys into the brush, the crew was re-embarked, the channel sounded and ranges obtained on shore by the use of which the gunboats were subsequently, under favorable conditions, able to enter; and the security of Dividing Creek had passed away.

But the work of the flotilla was not limited to the matter of blockading only. Each vessel was required to patrol the coast and river banks within her station, to prevent the construction of earthworks for batteries and the placing of obstructions in the channel.

By a general order, vessels were directed to be under way at night, and those having as many as four line officers on board were expected to have two picket boats out.

This left but one officer as a relief for picket duty, and the commanding officer alone to look out for the ship, to keep her afloat in deep water, and yet sufficiently near the shore to be within rescuing distance of the picket boats, to keep the look-outs and watch on deck on the alert and the engineer at the throttle from going to sleep; and, finally, to be at all times prepared for attack or defense against a boarding party such as successfully surprised and captured two of our gunboats in the Rappahannock.

The night work, taken in connection with the patrol duty during daylight, left for the officers but little if any time to rest. Sleep was a commodity very sparingly distributed. The relief officer could at best get but a couple of hours at a time, and the commanding officer none at all. A few cat-naps while the vessel was at anchor in a safe place for a brief interval during daylight was all that he could hope for.

But most of the men were young, full of healthy vigor and inured to hardship; so the fatigue of arduous duty was never considered when work had to be done in obedience to orders.

Once in two weeks, however, when a vessel went to headquarters (St. Inigoes) for coal and stores, the officers had a chance to store up a little sleep.

The foregoing is a brief statement of every-day routine on board ships in the lower or bay division of the flotilla, but it frequently became necessary, while the vessel was attending to her regular patrol duty, to detach a small party for landing purposes, to intercept and destroy, or if possible to capture and bring away, a cargo of smuggled goods known to have been landed and about to be transported to the interior (such information was usually obtained from friendly negroes).

A party of that character was ordinarily composed of from seven to eleven men and an officer, and the *modus operandi* was to land at the nearest point to the object sought, leave one or two men to take care of the boat, and with the rest make a dash for the road.

If it was found that the goods had departed and were not more than two or three miles away, the nearest farm would be visited, horses impressed and the party mounted. Then riding furiously over a country road, a great cloud of dust would be raised, the sight of which easily conveyed to the custodians of the goods the impression that a whole regiment was after them, with the result of a general skedaddle that left only the negro drivers of the teams with the caravan.

Many of these were not averse to being caught, and cheerfully turned back when ordered; furthermore, they would tell all they knew about the presence of armed forces in the neighborhood, and upon such information depended, as a rule, the disposition of the wares.

Occasionally a larger force would be organized, for a similar purpose, by combining detachments from several vessels, under command of a senior officer; but this was done only in cases where resistance was expected or distance to be traveled considerable.

Successful achievement of such an undertaking was made possible only by a bold dash and rapid movement throughout. Deliberation in a case of the kind would have been fatal, as the

Home Guard, if given time to assemble, was more than able to handle any number of men that could be spared from the vessels for service on shore.

As far as I know only one such party was ever captured; but several had hair-breadth escapes, with some of their men killed or wounded, generally from ambush after leaving the shore.

On rare occasions a small landing party would run up against a roving troop of regular cavalry, scouring the lower necks in search of forage recruits and horses for the army, and too strong to be engaged with any hope of success. Nothing serious, however, resulted from these meetings, as the country was abundantly wooded and cavalry could not follow without dismounting, which for some reason or other, so far as I know, they never attempted to do; and the fun of shooting from cover, while retreating, was a sort of picnic for the sailors.

In the foregoing pages I have endeavored to give a general idea of the flotilla and its works, with one or two examples of the methods employed, in special cases, to accomplish it. I will now, by way of explanation of the terms used to characterize the kind of fighting that was done, submit a few examples to elucidate that subject:

1. The flag of truce was so often violated, when displayed from shore, that it soon came to be regarded as merely a ruse to entice a picket or other boat within rifle range of the brush in order to murder the crew.

2. A man, in appearance a negro, would be seen frantically waving a white cloth on the shore. This was commonly understood to be a signal for relief and a boat would be sent to bring him off (in accordance with orders to that effect issued after the promulgation of the Emancipation Proclamation), but when within range, and before the boat could land, the man would suddenly fall back and disappear in the brush, after which a volley of rifle bullets would come whizzing about the heads of the crew.

3. Again, a firing party would be found operating behind a breastwork of unwilling women and children whose screams, lamentations and pleadings precluded the possibility of returning the fire.

I want here again to state my firm belief that none of these outrages were ever committed by Confederate troops or by members of the regular Home Guard; but by a gang of outlaws, who always selected, for the perpetration of their crimes, some locality other than the one in which they lived and were known. As subsequent investigation invariably proved, to the satisfaction of everybody, the people in the vicinity had nothing to do with it, but were compelled at the muzzle of a gun to do as they were told.

The above-mentioned cases are but samples of what occurred every day and all the time, although generally in less aggravated form, until patrol and picket duty became irksome and disagreeable as well as hazardous and dangerous.

When under these circumstances patience and forbearance were thoroughly exhausted, the practice of shelling every doubtful spot before passing it became the rule; and although by this method some innocent people may have been made to suffer, yet in view of the law of self preservation there appeared to be no other alternative.

Numerous expeditions, in force, to the head of navigation in the several rivers, were organized and executed under the personal orders of the Commander in Chief, or one of his division commanders, for the purpose of clearing away torpedoes or other obstructions, levelling earthworks, rifle pits and all other impediments to the free navigation of the rivers by transports carrying stores and equipments to the army; for the destruction of salt works and other aids to the enemy's cause; and, finally, for co-operation with the army in the field, operating against Confederate forces within gunboat range of the river.

But these are all recorded in the government publication

previously referred to and need not be specially mentioned here.

In addition to its regular work or service within its proper jurisdictional limits, the flotilla or a detachment therefrom was occasionally called upon for duty elsewhere.

It was a gunboat of the Potomac flotilla which, immediately after the evacuation of Yorktown and Gloucester by the Confederates, and the commencement of General McClellan's advance toward Richmond on his peninsular campaign in May, 1862, went up the York River, hoisted the flag on West Point, at the junction of the Mattaponi and Pamunkey rivers, then ascended the latter river to White House bridge, removing, on its passage, two sets of obstructions, and made the way clear for the army transports to White House.

Later, this same vessel, in company with an army gunboat, having on board a detachment of infantry, went up the Pamunkey to the head of navigation, near Hanover, and destroyed the rebel transport fleet used at Yorktown prior to evacuation; and still later, after McClellan's famous retreat, was at Malvern Hill, on James River, and participated in the engagement there and at Harrison's Landing and elsewhere.

Again, on the Rappahannock, during General Burnside's attack on Fredericksburg in December, 1862, a division of the Potomac flotilla was in active co-operation with the army there.

Many other instances of joint operations with army forces might be cited here, but they would add nothing new to history and are therefore omitted. It may, however, be stated that to the Potomac flotilla is due the preservation of railroad communication between Perryville and Baltimore, which, during each of the several raids into Maryland, was threatened by attempted destruction of the railroad crossings over the Susquehanna, Bush and Gunpowder rivers.

As a matter of fact one of these efforts on the part of the raiders came near to success when in July, 1864, a detachment

of Gen. Jubal Earley's force captured a train at Magnolia station, set it on fire and backed it on to the Gunpowder bridge, which in turn was ignited and slightly damaged.

The gunboat sent there arrived in time to see the burning train on the bridge, but for lack of water, grounded several miles away, yet the crew of the vessel was quickly landed, the fire put out and the bridge saved.

And further, as if there was not sufficient excitement to be found in the performance of the ordinary and the extraordinary duties of the flotilla, frequent rumors of prospective attempts to liberate the twenty thousand prisoners at Point Lookout were circulated to stimulate the wakefulness and vigilance of its personnel.

One of six hundred Confederate officers transferred from Point Lookout to Fort Delaware on board an army transport, convoyed by a gunboat, told me, after landing at Fort Delaware, that but for the "damn gunboat" they would have taken that steamer and gone home.

Finally, the flotilla was frequently required to furnish convoy for mailboats, transports and other vessels needing protection.

In conclusion I will say that "Parker's squadron tactics under steam" were first tried, tested and proven by maneuvers with the vessels of the Potomac flotilla, under the personal supervision of the author.

And now, in loyal remembrance of the old flotilla and reverend remembrance of those who have passed away, I have penned, with sincere affection for the few survivors of the Lincoln gunboats and others interested, these imperfect lines—"Lest we forget."

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